



Coronavirus Resources: Education

American Rescue Plan

Oregon's U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley pushed for passage of President Biden's *American Rescue Plan* to get stimulus checks in Americans' bank accounts, help Main Street businesses stay afloat, and save the unemployment insurance program that 20 million Americans are relying on to make ends meet.

With this bill, urgently needed resources will be delivered to state, local, and tribal governments so they support the health of communities, and also pay firefighters, first responders, and other critical employees. Resources will go to schools and educators so they can safely get students back in the classroom. Resources will go to struggling families who are balancing work, school, and childcare from home. Resources will get personal protective equipment in the hands of frontline health heroes. And resources will mobilize a massive, national vaccine distribution plan to get shots into arms, and get past this pandemic.

K-12 and School Reopening Resources in the Bill

- Nearly \$130 billion for grants to state educational agencies (**\$1.181 billion for Oregon**) to be made in accordance with the same terms and conditions applicable to funds provided in FY21 for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund and the Education Stabilization Fund to quickly and safely reopen schools, keep schools open, and make up for lost learning time.
 - States may not reserve more than 0.5 percent for administrative costs.
- Adds three new set-asides for education funding—\$1.25 billion for evidence-based summer enrichment, \$1.25 billion for afterschool programs, and \$3 billion for education technology.
- \$850 million for grants to Bureau of Indian Education-operated and funded elementary and secondary schools and Tribal Colleges or Universities.
- Includes a maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement as a condition for receiving funds, requiring states maintain support for elementary and secondary education in FYs 2022 and 2023 at least at the levels of such support that is the average of such state's support provide in FYs 2017-19
 - Also includes a maintenance of equity provision to ensure higher-poverty local educational agencies and schools do not face disproportionate cuts.
- \$7.59 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund and requires the FCC to provide funding from this Fund to eligible schools and libraries to enable them to provide eligible connected devices, internet service, and equipment necessary to support internet service to students and teachers.
- The Congress appropriated an additional \$1.3 billion under the COVID relief law to be used to supplement the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEERF) awarded to each state with an approved GEERF application under the *CARES Act*. Additional information about the GEERF can be found [here](#).
- \$2.75 billion was set aside for the Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) program, which provide services or assistance to eligible K-12 private schools to address the impact that COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on non-public school students and teachers. The EANS certification and agreement can be found [here](#).
- \$1.25 billion for evidence-based summer enrichment and \$1.25 billion for afterschool programming.
- \$30 million for Project AWARE to advance wellness and resiliency in education.
- \$20 million for youth suicide early intervention and prevention strategies program

Higher Education Resources in the Bill

- Nearly \$40 billion for grants (**\$401 million for Oregon**) to institutions of higher education to be made in accordance to the same terms and conditions applicable to funds provided in FY21 for the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund of the Education Stabilization Fund.
 - Public and private nonprofit institutions are required to spend at least 50 percent of allocations on emergency financial aid grants to students, including students exclusively enrolled in distance learning, while for-profit institutions will have to spend 100 percent of allocations on student aid. More information can be found [here](#).
 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Minority-Serving Institutions, and other under-resourced institutions will receive 7.5 percent of funds.
- \$91 million for Student Aid Administration within the Department of Education to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19, including direct outreach to students and borrowers about financial aid, economic impact payments, means-tested benefits, and tax benefits they may be eligible for.
- \$100 million for the Institute of Education Sciences to study learning loss and disseminate findings to state and local education agencies.
- States must maintain support for higher education in fiscal years (FY) 2022 and 2023 at least at the levels of such support that is the average of such state's support for higher education provided in FYs 2017, 2018, and 2019. Additional information on the MOE can be found [here](#).

Student Loans Resources in the Bill

- On January 20, 2021, President Biden signed a presidential memorandum that extended the student loan relief provisions authorized by the *CARES Act*.
 - These provisions include suspending federal student loan payments and accrued interest through September 30, 2021, and protection against forced collections on federal student loans (such as the garnishment of tax refunds, wages, and Social Security benefits) and negative credit reporting.
 - Borrowers should have received notification that their loan payments are put on hold. When regular student loan payments resume, the U.S. Department of Education will notify student loan borrowers to inform them. These notices are intended to provide a transition period to help borrowers stay on track as regular loan payments begin again and to enroll in other relief options (such as income-driven repayment) at such time. For more information, visit the Federal Student Aid's website [here](#).
- The *American Rescue Plan* ensures that all COVID-19 student loan relief is tax-free for relief received between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2025. For example, if your income-driven repayment plan becomes eligible for loan forgiveness in that time period, the amount of the loan that is discharged will not be included in the calculation of your gross income.

For updates: Visit merkley.senate.gov/coronavirus for updates on these and other resources.